ii. DOT has released a part of the outstanding dues.

iii. IFCI has reduced the margin money requirement for their loan to HCL from 30 % to 10 %.

iv. Financial assistance under NRF is being given for implementation of VRS and reduction of fixed cost.

(e) The order book position of HCL during each of the last 3 years and till 31st October, 1996 is as under :

	1993-94 (Rs. in crore)	1994-95	1995-96	1996-97 (Upto Oct. 1996)
Opening order	244	66	110	255
Order received during the year	308	609	477	119
Orders executed during the year	486	565	332	208
Orders carried over	66	110	255	166

(f) To boost fresh orders DOT has been requested to earmark 30% of its annual requirement of telecom cables for procurement from HCL and also give 50% advance to HCL alongwith purchase orders.

Loss Suffered by MMTC due to Irregularities

404. SHRI T. GOPAL KRISHNA :
SHRI K.S. RAYADU :

Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state :

(a) whether Minerals and Metals Trading Corporation of India Ltd. has incurred losses due to irregularities recently;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the steps taken to set right the working of the MMTC?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI BOLLA BULLI RAMAIAH) : (a) No, Sir.

(b) and (c). Do not arise.

Removal of Quantitative Restrictions on All Imports

405. DR. T. SUBBARAMI REDDY : Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state :

(a) whether India's commitment to World Trade Organisation's provisions has prompted the Government to seek Industry's views on opening of the consumer goods industry and eliminate quantitative restrictions on their imports;

(b) if so, the reasons for such commitment;

(c) whether his Ministry has discussed this issue with all the organisations and industrialists;

(d) if so, the details thereof; and

(e) the time by which a final decision is likely to be taken in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI BOLLA BULLI RAMAIAH) : (a) to (e). Article XI of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade, 1994 requires that no prohibitions or restrictions other than duties, taxes or other charges, whether made effective through quotas, import or export licences or other measures shall be maintained by any members of the World Trade Organization (WTO). However, keeping in view the difficult balance of payments situation, India has been maintaining import restrictions since 1948 under Article XII, and since 1950 under Article XVIII.

During the last B.O.P. Committee consultations held in December, 1995 with India, many members of the WTO Committee on Balance-of-Payments-Restrictions stated that India's balance-of-payments position was comfortable, that India did not currently face the threat of a serious decline in foreign exchange resources as set out in Article XVIII and that, therefore, continued recourse to import restrictions for balance-of-payments reasons by India could not be justified. Many members requested India to present a time-table for phasing out the restrictions. In its conclusion, the Committee welcomed India's readiness to resume the consultations in October, 1996 and to notify to be WTO all remaining restrictions maintained for balance-of-payments purposes soon after the announcement of the 1996-97 Export-Import Policy. Accordingly, a notification regarding the quantitative restrictions was made to the WTO in July, 1996.

The time-table for removal of quantitative restrictions maintained on import of products, including the consumer goods, will be known only after the resumed consultations with India in the WTO Committee on Balance-of-Payments-Restrictions, which have now been postponed to January, 1997.

There is no requirement to consult the industry in the removal of QRs. However, industry's views on major

trade policy issues are made known during interactions at the meetings held by the Commerce Ministry from time to time, including at the meeting of the Board of Trade, and these are taken into account while formulating the policies.

Financial Irregularities and FERA Violations by Companies

406. SHRIMATI GEETA MUKHERJEE: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government have received evidences of involvement of certain important private companies in financial irregularities including FERA violations;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the steps taken to check such violations and to safeguard the interest of share holders in such companies?

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE (SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM): (a) to (c). The information is being collected and will be laid on the Table of the House.

Setting up of Industries in U.P.

407. SHRI ASHOK PRADHAN: Will the Minister of INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government propose to set up any industry around Khurja city of Uttar Pradesh;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether any survey has been conducted or is likely to be conducted in this regard; and

(d) if so, by when and if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF INDUSTRY (SHRI MURASOLI MARAN): (a) At present there is no plan to set up any Central Public Sector Undertaking around Khurja city of U.P.

(b) to (d). Do not arise.

[Translation]

Production of Coal

408. SHRI DATTA MEGHE:
SHRI HARIN PATHAK:

Will the Minister of COAL be pleased to state:

(a) whether country is not self-sufficient in the production of coal;

(b) if so, the details regarding the annual growth of coal alongwith the consumption as well as demand in the country;

(c) whether the gap between the demand and availability is likely to be increased during the current financial year;

(d) if so, to what extent; and

(e) the steps taken by the Government to increase the production of coal?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COAL (SHRIMATI KANTI SINGH): (a) The domestic production of coking coal of the quality required for metallurgical use is not adequate to meet the domestic demand. Some import of superior grades of coking coal is also necessary for blending purposes on quality considerations. The domestic production of superior grades of non-coking coal is limited. Some mismatch between the demand and availability of non-coking coals also occurs as a result of transport mismatches and due to unanticipated increase in demand.

(b) The annual growth in domestic production and consumption of coal has been as follows:

Year	Annual gwoth in production over earlier year (%)	Annual growth in coal consumption over earlier year in (%)
92-93	3.85	5.3
93-94	3.33	5.1
94-95	3.11	2.3
95-96	6.47	7.5
96-97 (targeted)	6.85	-

The growth in demand as assessed by Planning Commission is given below:

Year	Percentage growth over earlier year
1992-93	4.47
1993-94	4.71
1994-95	(-) 0.20
1995-96	7.26
1996-97	12.84

(c) Yes, Sir.

(d) The Planning Commission has indicated that there would be a gap of 36.35 million tonnes in demand and domestic availability of coal in the country during 1996-97.

(e) Steps being taken to augment domestic production of coal include the following:

(i) Opening up of new mines and increasing efficiency and productivity in existing mines by modernisation, application of new technologies and ensuring timely availability of inputs and infrastructural facilities.

(ii) Partial de-regulation of coal prices is likely to improve internal resource generation of coal companies which will enable new projects to be taken up. It will also